

PROOFS
OF *H. C. a.*
God's Being,
AND OF
The SCRIPTURES
Divine Original.

With Twenty DIRECTIONS for
the Profitable Reading of them.

Being the Sum of Several

SERMONS

Desired by many Hearers.

By DANIEL BURGESS.

The Second Edition.

*The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God, Ps. 14. 1.
Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, Mat. 22. 29.
He shall read in the Law all the Days of his Life, that
he may learn to fear the Lord his God, Deut. 17. 19.*

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To the most Honoured SOPHRONIA.

MADAM;

TO these small Fragments, I inscribe this proper Name of Yours. For which I have a great Example, and valuable Reasons.

My Example is John the Divine; who hath inscribed a short Collection of sacred Learning to an Elect Lady. And, my Reasons are these.

Your Ladiship hath been such a Reader, that you are become a Judge of Books; as a grave Antient speaks of a rare Lady in his Age. Neither is it question'd, but your religious Principle gives you a more than common Savour of my Divine Arguments. And, as confident I am, that Sophronia's Name will attract Readers; and her Holy Prayers may fetch a Blessing from Heaven on their Reading!

Full well her Ladiship seeth the sore need. Our Age being one very fruitful of Religions, and barren of what is truly Religious. One that has been contending so long for bare Garbs and Dresses of Religion, that it has very little left it more than Dresses, Garbs, and Modes of Religion.

It is come to that pass, that Fools fear not to shoot their Bolts. And, they who say it not with their Lips, do say in their Lives, that, That there is no God. Our Theists be generally Atheists; and do shew plainly, that their Clamour be against Three Persons, their Wrath and Spite is against One God! Insomuch, that Nullitarians is a much more proper Name for them than Unitarians. Surely, Goats, whatever Milk they give, are Brutes. And, Panthers, though they have wonderfully sweet Scents, are very ill Creatures. Some of our Deists are open-handed to the Poor; one of them especially, with his or other folks Money. And, as Faustus Socinus before him, he is complaisant and sweet even to such as detest and oppose his Heresie. Joining himself in the Society for Reformation of Manners. But, scarcely is there one Snake of them, whose Poison is not seen through his best painted Skin! Immoral Poison, I mean; and such Impurity. as

A 2

speaks

speaks no good Will to Deity. And, it is worthy to be remembred, what a great Man, who was in danger of being taken in their Pit, did put to Socinus himself, and his Followers. 'If your Doctrine be

Nulla pietatis commendatione, &c. Scrupuli ab excellenti Viro propositi, inter Oper. Socini.

'the Truth, how comes it to be so, that it is contended for by no Men of any good Name for Piety, any Praise for exemplary Life and Conversation? But the contrary they are, who set forth your Opinions.

The Holy Scriptures are complemented a little; but not revered at all, by the Many. The Socinian prefers his Light of Reason; as the Quaker doth his Light within. Which is but the same Farthing-Candle, differently denominated, And, not a few bold Sparks say plainly, They are but of Men, and not from Heaven.

Surely, Sophronia, the Arch-Bishop of Mentz did long ago speak all their Hearts. At the Diet of Auffsburg, in the Year 1530, lighting on a Bible, and reading a while in it, he very honestly professed, that he knew not well what Book it was, but he saw plainly that it made against the Papal way.

Miserable is the manner, in which our common Protestants do read the Sacred Scripture. There is no doubt, but the Transgression of it saith within Sophronia's Heart, There is no Fear of God before so irreverent Eyes! And, her Ladiship will not blame me, for sending forth these Antidotes in days of such Contagion. If it be my fault that I send forth no more, that Fault shall as soon be mended as it is made to appear. Indeed St. Austin adviseth to much Writing in a time of much Corruption: That in the plenty of Books all Men may find what will best sate their different Palates. But whither runs my Pen?

Madam; Under the most sensible Obligation of your very singular Favours, I am ever praying, that great may be your Reward in Heaven. And, in all Sincerity, I shall continue to be

Bridges-street near
Covent-garden,
July 1. 1697.

Your Ladiship's most Humble,
and most Devoted Servant,
DAN. BURGESS.

PROOFS of God's Being, and of the Scriptures Divine Origin.

With DIRECTIONS for profitable
Reading of the Scriptures.

CHAP. I.

*The Arguments by which the Holy Ghost refresheth Souls,
with the revived Sense of God's Being, are principal-
ly these,*

Arg. 1. **M**y Conscience is as a thousand Witness-
ses to me, that there is a God. For,
within me I have it sitting as an
Inferiour Judge, and still acting
in the Name of a Superior. Even a supream one, and
infinitely above all Mortal ones. *When I do what is
Evil, tho ever so secretly, and both without Mens
Knowledge, and beyond their Power to Revenge ;
this inward Judge puts me to Shame, and fills me
with Fear. Telling me, there is an All-seeing Eye
that observes me, and as just a Hand that will punish
me, sooner or later. And, when I do what is good,
tho it Thunders, I am secure. Tho wild Men scoff,
threaten, and even persecute me for it, yet I am ea-
sie. This inward Judge telling me, there is one a-
bove all, who will see that nothing shall harm me while
I follow that which is Good.*

Whence, I wonder, rose this subordinate Judge, if
there be no supream One ?

A. 2. *The Universal Consent of all Nations witnesseth
to me, that there is a God.* As Conscience within me.

so all the World before me, and round about me, does witness it. The Inhabitants of some Countries do wear no *Clothes*, and dwell in no *Houses*; but they do own *some God*, all of them. And alas, when, or where met they all, to conspire in this *Creed*? Or, what was it that moved them all to agree in it? In short;

If there be no God above the Heavens, what has kept alive the Notion of one, through all Ages?

A. 3. *The Confession of his worst Enemies witnesseth to me, that there is a God.* For, could ever any Atheist free himself from the Fear of a God? And, have not *Cains*, *Balaams*, *Judasess*, *Nero's*, *Julians*, and the like, been made to see, feel, and confess God to be? It is true, *Allan* observes, that usually the *Vulgar People* were most deeply impressed with the Sense of a God; and that *Learned Men* made so ill use of their Art and Subtilty, as to dispute themselves into Uncertainty. But, it's sure, their *wicked Wits* could never find a way to extinguish their tormenting Fears of an invisible God and Judge. And,

If there be no God, how came all Men to be thus afraid of one? And, his Enemies to confess him?

A. 4. *The Beginning of this material World witnesseth to me, there is a God.* For, *Testimony* I have, that it was not from Eternity. *Aristotle* says, the Philosophers before his time were of Opinion, that it had a Beginning. And, better Witnesses are not to seek. *Reason* also I have, which convinces me, that the World was not from Eternity; but was, at a certain time, as the *Chaldeans*, the *Greeks*, and *Latin Poets*, and *Philosophers*, held it to be. For, could it make it self? That is as impossible, as for a House to build it self. And, if it be supposed to have been from Eternity, why hear we of nothing that is *six thousand Years Old*? How comes it about, that it is not yet inhabited, all of it? Yea, and over-stock'd too. But, if it was ever made, there must needs be a Maker; that is, a God.

If there be no God, how came there to be a World?

If no Builder, how came there to be so large a City?

A. 5. *The excellent Contrivance of all things in this World, witnesseth to me that there is a God.* For, there is not one Blot in the whole Volume of this Work. In the Heavens, on the Earth, in the Sea, we have nothing but Wonders of Wisdom. The Returns of Night and Day, of Winter and Summer; the Production of Minerals; the Growth of Plants; the Generation of Animals. And, the admirable Instinct by which they are all inclined and enabled to preserve themselves and their Young. The apt Disposition of the several Parts in all Bodies, for their proper Uses. How astonishing are these, all? And, unto what Cause can they be ascribed?

If there be no infinitely wise God, from whence rose all this Excellency? From whence is this so God-like Work? Regular Work, and worthy of a God, whose Way is perfect?

A. 6. *The Human Nature especially witnesseth to me, that there is a God.* For, such a Son could never have been without such a Father. What a Body is Man's? Galen, a Man little inclined to Religion, was driven to acknowledge a Deity by his Consideration of this Body. Of Parts, so numerous, various, beautiful, and durable. And, almost all the internal ones unknown to the Fathers of our Flesh. And, as for the Soul, what is like it? What a Mind, what a Memory, what a Conscience, &c. has it? In a word; what a Principle hath it, inclining it to seek well-being? What another Faculty, to judge of the Nature of things, fit to serve him, or to disserve him? And, another, to chuse and prosecute things accordingly? How like is the Humane Spirit to the Father of Spirits? And, what is to be thought of the inexplicable Union betwixt our Soul and Body? Our thinking Spirit, and our shining Clay.

If there be no God, how came there to be such a thing as Man?

A. 7. *The Continuance and the Quietness of the things of this World, witnesseth to me that there is a God.* For, what is it that holds the Heavens above us, the

Earth under us, the *Life* in us? Why are not all the *Lamps of Heaven* burnt out? Why is not the *Earth*, that hangs upon nothing, long ago fallen down? How is it that not one *Species of Creature* is yet lost? That of the vast Army of them, none do so *mutiny* as to destroy them that are most contrary to them? That the *Fire* doth not make the *Air* too thin for our Use; boil and consume the *Water*; scorch, and make a Brick of the *Earth*? That the *Water* doth not drown the Earth and all things on it? That the *Earth* doth not drink up the *Water*?

If there be not a *God, and Lord of Hosts*, how stands the World, and the Host of jarring Creatures keep their Ranks and Orders, so sweetly as we see?

A. 8. *The Works of Providence concerning Mankind do witness to me, there is a God.* Both the common ones, which accompany vertuous Actions, and vicious ones, with Rewards and Punishments. These make it plain, that *there is a God that judgeth in the Earth*. Yet highly reasonable it seems to me, that a Supream Ruler and absolute Sovereign should sometimes try his Servants by Hardships; and with long suffering, endure his Enemies to insult for a while. Inasmuch, that the very *Prosperity of Sinners, and Adversity of good Men*, is also an Argument to me, that there is a God who governs all things. Again, the extraordinary Dispensations of Providence; in delivering of *Joseph* out of Prisons, and *Daniels* out of Lions Dens, and *young Saints* out of fiery Furnaces. And, in raining Fire from Heaven upon *Sodomites*, striking dead an *Ananias* and *Saphira*, smiting a swelling *Herod* with an Angel, and the like; these do proclaim aloud, that there is *one in the Heavens who neither slumbers nor sleeps*.

If there be no God, how is it that ordinarily *it goes well with the Righteous*, And *they who say there is no God, have their Sorrows multiplied*? How is it, that Wonders are wrought for Saints, and against Sinners?

A. 9. *Miracles do witness unto me, that there is a God.*

God, For, can these be wrought, without a Power superiour to any that Mortals can pretend unto?

If there be no Almighty God, how were ever the Dead raised? The Winds and Seas checked? The Sun made to stand still, and to go back?

A. 10. *Prophecies Fulfilment witnesseth to me, that there is a God.* For, who but an Omniscient God can possibly foreknow such future things, as in their Circumstances are most contingent? But of such there have been many plain Predictions, at very many Years distance; as the Heathen History, as well as Christian, doth attest. Thus Cicero of old did argue; there being such a thing as PROPHECY, there must needs be a Deity!

If there be no God, how came so many future things to be foretold?

A. 11. *Particularly, the State of the Jewish Nation witnesseth to me that there is a God.* If not, by what means hath it been with that People for sixteen hundred Years, as it was foretold? And, so as it never was with any People since the beginning of Time. Out of their Land they have been driven; particular Place of abode, as a Nation, they have had none. Scattered over all the habitable World, they have been: And, scorned and hated in every place. Not mixed with other Nations, so as to be lost among them; but still kept up as a distinct People; kept as a standing Memorial to the World, of the Divine Wrath for their Rejection of the Salvation of God, and Consolation of Israel.

If there be no God, whose Wrath is it that is come upon the Jews to the uttermost?

A. 12. *The being of such a Book in the World as that of the Scripture of Old and New Testament, witnesseth to me that there is a God.* For, if there be no God, who made that Book; which is as much more wonderful than Mens Books, as the Works of the Creation are more wonderful than Mens Works? I can as soon believe that a poor Carpenter raised the Roof of the Heavens, as that any Mortal ever endited the Ho-

by Scriptures. The *Design* of them is too glorious, the *Doctrine* too sublime, the *Precepts* too wise and too impartial, the *Threats* too awful, the *Promises* too rich, for Creature to invent.

If there be no God, what Original hath that God-like Word?

CHAP. II.

The Arguments by which the Holy Spirit doth confirm his Servants Minds in the Persuasion that the Scripture of Old and New Testament is the Word of God, are principally, these :

ARG. 1. **I**Ts *Antiquity* commends it to me for God's Book. Novelty might occasion Jealousie. But reasonable it seems, that, pleasing to have a Book in the World, God should order his own Book to have the Honour of being the first.

And, this *his Book* was surely the First in the World; as the Jews, *his People* of Old, were the first Nation. *Homer's Writings*, Chronologers make six hundred Years after *Moses*; and *Orpheus* his Writings, five hundred.

A. 2. *Its Penmens Sanctity* doth commend it to me for God's Book. For, of unquestionable Holiness they were, all of them. Humbly they confess their own Faults; and impartially tell the Faults of their dearest Friends. Powerfully they preach all manner of Holy Conversation. Teaching, that of every idle Word there must be given an account one Day. And, as they preached, they lived. A straiter Gate than the World's, they entered; and a narrower Way they walked in. Of many things lawful they denied themselves. And of the common Enjoyments of Mankind, many, were deprived. Bonds and Afflictions abiding them, for their Doctrine. Doctrine, which exposed them to nothing in the World, but Pains Active and Passive.

What then, beside the Spirit of God acting them, could

could possibly make them so to write? What, but the Holy Spirit kindled in them a Fire which they could not suppress? Express in that Saying, *We can not but speak the things which we have seen and heard!*

A. 3. *The vast Distance of these Holy and Harmonious Writers of the Scripture, doth commend it to me for God's Book.* The Distance of them from one another, as to Place, and as to Time. For they were of distant Countries, many of them. And lived at very distant Ages. From the first Writing of Moses to the last of St. John, were about two thousand Years. Though all their Writings seem to be drawn but by the different Pens of one and the same Writer.

Insomuch, that it's utterly impossible that they should have ever conspired together to deceive the World. Or should have wrote so harmoniously, but that they were acted all by the same Spirit of harmonious Truth and Goodness.

A. 4. *The Miracles wherewith it has been confirmed; do further commend it to me for God's Book.* Moses wrought about seventy six. The Prophets in the time of the first Temple, wrought about an hundred and fifty. Our Saviour wrought innumerable. And, the Apostles abundance. And such, that the most spiteful Enemies could, never detect any the least Imposture in them, but were forced to confess the Evidence.

What then? Can any but God's Almighty Power work Miracles? Or, would that work them to confirm Cheats? If not, the Holy Scripture must be God's own Book.

A. 5. *The Accomplishment of its Prophecies doth commend it to me for God's Book.* From its first publishing, it hath ever been a Prognostication of things to come. And, as the Events have shown, an infallible one. Yea, and an universal one. For, nothing good or bad befall, but that which was foretold. The History of the Jews one may take out of the Predictions of Moses. And the Life of Christ one may gather out of the Writings of the Prophets. But I may not enlarge.

Unquestionably, that Book is God's, wherein innumerable things are foretold, and all come to pass, not one failing.

A. 6. *The strange Propagation of it commends it to me for God's own Book.* Never in this World was any Book so diffused; so extensively, so speedily, so argumentatively; without *Decoys* or *Dragoons*. Through *Europe*, *Asia*, much of *Africa*; and now in *America*, it is made much of. Within thirty Years time, it spread far and near throughout, and beyond the *Roman Empire*. It hath nothing to allure Men to it, or *afright* them to it. Nothing of worldly Consideration to do either. Men were not told, that they should have *Safety*, *Wealth*, or *Honour*, if they embraced the Scripture. No, but they were told, and they saw the contrary. Neither were they wheedled in with *enticing Eloquence*. No, there was nothing to commend it but *Demonstration of the Spirit and Power*. Wherefore, I ask;

Whose Book, but God's, must it be, that dispossesth Satan; and makes Families and Nations to renounce Religions received by a long Tradition? And, that in the face of Danger and very Death. For no Reason in the World, but *to flee from the Wrath*, and *to obtain the Love of God*.

A. 7. *Its Effects upon the Souls of such as receive it, do commend it to me for God's Book.* Wondrous Effects I have read, and heard of; wondrous ones (it may be I have felt, but) certainly upon the Souls of others I have seen. No Book did ever so convince Men of their Sins, and of their evil State; none did ever so prick them through the Heart. No Book did ever so turn Mens Minds and Hearts, Thoughts and *Cares*, to the pleasing of God; None did ever so depress Mens *Esteem*, so chill their *Zeal*, so moderate and regulate their *Activity* for things temporal. No Book did ever so resolve Mens *Doubts*, so vanquish their *Fears*, so raise their *Hopes*, so heighten their *Comforts*, so animate their Hearts with *Courage*, and make so full of Life in very Death it

And how could this Book have done it, if it had not been God's own; and had not been followed with his co-operating Almighty Spirit?

A. 8. *The Martyrdoms suffered for it do commend it to me for God's Book.* For, what but a Divine Power and Impulse on Mens Souls, should make thousands give up themselves to Death, for asserting of any Book's Divine Truth? Had ever any Book on Earth the thousandth part of the Scriptures Martyrs? No, nor the ten thousandth part. There were not so many Paschal Lambs slain in all the Old Testament days, as there were Martyrs slain for maintaining the Truth of the Scriptures, in the very ten first Persecutions. It's credibly reported, that under Charles the 9th of France, and Philip the 2d of Spain, in little more than five Years, two hundred thousand were martyred for the Scriptures.

Without all peradventure it must be God's Book, for the Honour whereof he enables so many Persons, learned as well as unlearned, of noble as well as of low degree, even cheerfully to die. Persons, that had Flesh and Blood, as well as others; loved Life, cared for their Families, valued their Friends as truly as any others.

A. 9. *The Judgments executed by God upon the Revilers of it, do commend it to me for God's Book.* For, if it be not God's own Book, it is a heap of Lies. And if it be so, why should the God of Truth and Mercy curse and blast the Opposers of it? For, this he hath most signally done, in all Ages. Who knows not what he did to the Jews for opposing the Gospel? In succeeding times, how very few Persecutors died natural Deaths? Of particular Men, cursed for their Abuse of the Scripture, History gives vast Numbers. Appion scoffing at the Old Testament, was struck with an extraordinary Ulcer that killed him. Lucian barking like a Dog at the New Testament, his Dogs fell mad and tore him to pieces. Julian the notorious Scoffer, died confessing that Christ was too many for him.

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The Lord is known to be the Author of this Book, by the Judgments which he executes upon the Enemies of it.

A. 10. *The Blessing which it carries with it, whither-soever it goes, do commend it to me for God's Book.* Manifest it is, and undeniable, that no good thing, for Body or for Mind, is withheld from them who entertain the Holy Scripture. That, as the Sun brings Light and Heat with it, this Scripture brings Temporal and Spiritual Good with it. Inasmuch, that the Nations which have it, do excel those which have it not, as illustriously as Day excelleth Night. What are Heathens, and what are Mahometans, but wretched Slaves to their Lusts, and to their Rulers: which are so many Butchers, rather than Pastors. Yea, what Lives, least Jews and Papists, that thrust away the Scripture from them, for the most part; and all of it, in effect? What People under Heaven do know so much, eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet, wear the Wool, the Flax and the Silk, and dwell at ease, so much as Protestants? Or, those who have the Scripture read of all Men, and preached unto all. The Inhabitants of London and Westminster lived like Brute Creatures, when Paul's Church was Diana's Temple, and Westminster-Abbey was Apollo's. But in short; If this be not God's Book, why should he so visibly and highly honour it? Why should he make that in receiving it there should be so very great Reward?

A. 11. *The Hatred and Opposition of Devil and World against it, do commend it to me for God's Book.* It is against God and the things of God, that the carnal Mind is Enemy. And, if this Book be not God's, whence riseth the extream Hostility of all carnal Minds against it? If it were of the World, and of the Confederate Devil, they would love their own. But, nothing have they ever hated so much. Against this Book, their Philosophers have most disputed; their Politicians most complotted; their Orators have vomited forth whole Dictionaries of Words; their Tyrants ordered

dered Prisons, Gibbets, torturing Engines, and Fires. And 'tis not to be forgot; while the Jews had all the Word of God, all the World's Arrows were shot at the Jews. But when they cast off God's Word, then all the most envenomed Arrows were turned off from the Jews, and directed against the Christians.

Surely, It is because this Book is from Heaven, and not of Men, that the World hateth it!

A. 12. Its marvellous Preservation through all Ages, does commend it to me for God's Book. Many a time, yea all times, hath it been afflicted, from its very Youth, by the malignant World. But, of all the Herods that have sought its Life, every one hath been disappointed. It is much more ancient than the Heathen Gods; and still holds up its Head, with- gre the Malice of Men and Devils. It hath been cast into many a fiery Furnace; and yet, as to its Divine Doctrines, not a Hair of them is singed. In Joshua's time there was but one Copy of the Law. In Dioclesian's Days there were few Bibles escaped the Fire. Yet, behold still this Book abroad, and is entire. What then? Would God preserve, and so preserve it, if it were not his own Book? On the contrary; must he not for his own Name's sake, and for his Peoples sake, have publicly witnessed against it, and destroyed it? Must he not have made haste so to do, if it were not his Book?

Certainly, God is the Author; because even miraculously he is the Saviour of this Book.

CHAP. III.

Twenty Directions for Reading the Holy Scriptures with Spiritual Profit.

Direct. 1. **P**UT off your Shoes, when you come to God's Oracles. The Holy Bible is no Common Book; nor is it to be read with a common frame of Heart. But, with the most profoundly reverent

berent one. It is God's Mouth unto us. And, what Moses and Joshua were commanded to do when they approached God's Presence, and were to hear his Voice; the same it behoves us to do, *Exod. 3. 5. Josh. 5. 15.*

Putting off Shoes signifieth Awe, Humiliation, and Readiness to all Obedience. Wherefore, in our Reading take we the Apostle's Direction, *Heb. 12. 28. Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear.*

D. 2. Bow your Knees, before you open your Bibles. Pray for Eye-salve, before you read. Without which, the very Eagles will be short-sighted, Naifest Understandings will be Reprobate Minds. *Psal. 119. 18. Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law.*

The Word, without its Inspirer's Illumination, is no more than a Dial without Sunshine. Pray then, as Moses, *Exod. 33. 18. I beseech thee shew me thy Glory.*

D. 3. Vomiting, before you Drink. Be wise as Serpents Natural; of whom Historians say, that it's a constant practice to cast forth their Poison, before they take a Draught out of any Streams; Carnal Affections are your Venoms; Renouncing of them is vomiting them forth: Omitting of this Vomit, is spoiling of your Draught of the Waters of Life. For, as *Rom. 8. 7. The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, and, is not subject to the Law, nor can it be.* And it's easie to think, what Paraphrase will be made by Malevolence; what Comment, by Enmity. Very wisely the Apostle directs us, *James 1. 21. to lay apart all our Filthiness, and superfluity of Naughtiness, and so receive God's Word to save our Souls.*

D. 4. Say, it is Manna, when you see a Bible. Thus said the Israelites, when they saw the Bread given them from Heaven: *Exod. 16. 15. It is Manna, i. e. What is this? Or, This is a Portion!* Profitably wou'd you use it? Then, think always of its wonderful Usefulness. Seed it is, to beget us to God, *James 1. 18.*

1. 18. *Milk* it is, to nourish us, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. *Meat* it is, to strengthen us, 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. *Wine* it is, to comfort us, *Rom.* 15. 4. *Light* it is, to direct us, *Psal.* 119. 105. A *Sword* it is, to defend us, *Ephes.* 6. 17. *More than Gold* it is, to enrich us, *Psal.* 119. 72. A *Companion* it is, in Solitude to talk with us, *Prov.* 6. 22. The *Power of God* it is, to save us, *Rom.* 1. 16.

O Children of *Abraham*, keep in mind the Words of your Father *Abraham*; If Men bear not *Moses* and the *Prophets*, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

D. 5. *Resolve to take all that your Physician prescribes.* (It is the Man who is resolved to do God's Will, that hath the Promise of being made to know it, *John* 7. 17.) To read without this Resolution, is to mock our Souls Physician. Wherefore, as oft as you read, say as *Exod.* 19. 8. *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.* Concerning which, it is said by God himself, *Deut.* 5. 28. *They have well spoken.* Holy Purpose, is Salt that must not be lacking in any Sacrifice. The Holy Apostle shews what a reckoning he made of it, by the Particulars wherewith he joins it, 2 *Tim.* 3. 10. *Thou hast fully known my Doctrine, manner of Life, PURPOSE, Faith, Long-suffering, Charity, Patience.*

D. 6. *Know that you are sick when you have lost your Stomach.* Your Stomach, and Appetite to God's Word. Only dead People, and very sick ones, are without Hunger, and craving for Food. Happy they, who daily feel Hunger and Thirst after the Bread and Water of Life. And who, then when they feel them not, do feel the bitter want of them. Our Saviour being Judge; They who say they have need of nothing, are *Wretched, Miserable, Poor, Blind, and Naked*; *Rev.* 3. 17. And *Psal.* 107. 9. *God satisfieth the longing Soul, he filleth the hungry Soul with Goodness.*

D. 7. *Blame your Palate, when you relish not your Bread.* The Distemper of your Spirit is very bitter,

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when the Word of God is not very sweet. Yea, and the sweeter unto your Tastes for being bitter unto your Lusts. Hypocrites wish that God would alter his Scriptures; *Israelites* indeed do wish that God would alter their Hearts. They know Honey is sweet, and his Word is Honey; and their Hearts have a hellish *Pica*, when they relish not his heavenly *Manna*. When they are themselves, their Note is this; *Psalmt 119. 103. How sweet are thy Words to my Taste?* And (as *Job* spake of a Bible hugely inferiour unto ours) *ch. 23. 12. I have esteemed the Words of his Mouth more than my necessary Food.*

D. 8. Give the Lion of the Tribe of Judah his Honour. This Lion is the Lord Jesus Christ. His Honour that I speak of, is the Prophetical Office. The Office of loosening the Seals, and opening the Book of God, as *Rev. 5. 4, 5.* To give Christ this Honour, is to apply unto him, and on him to depend, for opening both the Scriptures to our Understandings, and our Understandings that they may receive the Scriptures. What? Is it for nothing, that he is named the *Light of the World?* *John 8. 12.* And that we read, *Luke 24. 45. He, HE opened their Understandings that they might understand the Scriptures.* And *1 John 5. 20. The Son of God is come, and hath given us an Understanding, that we may know him that is true.*

D. 9. Depose not Christ's Vicar upon Earth. Understand me not of an old Man at Rome. It is the Holy Ghost, who is sent from Heaven to be Christ's Vicar on this Earth, as *Ternullian* well styled him. To do Christ's Will and Work here, as Christ did all his Father's Work, and all the Work he gave him to do. Particularly, to teach his Church, to lead them into all Truth, to sanctifie, and to comfort them. But this glorious Vicar of Christ is deposed by as many as expect to have Christ teach them to profit without his Co-operation; and, go read, (and do other Duties) expecting Saving-Benefit without the Helping-Hand of this Officer.

Their

Their Judgment, these do receive. And, if any Sinners be so, they are utterly without excuse. Inasmuch as they are so plainly, and so often told, that this blessed Spirit is he without whom Christ will not teach any Man, or comfort any one, 1 Cor. 12. 3. *No Man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.* Rom. 8. 9. *If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* And ver. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the Sons of God.*

D. 10. *Count your selves living Men or dead, according as you read.* For, other way to be saved there is none, but by Benefit of this Book, Rom. 1. 17. Wherefore as oft as the Book is in your Hand, let this Thought be in your Heart: If I do not understand it and obey it, I shall surely be judged by it, and condemned by it. So the Gospel, 2 Cor. 4. 3. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.* On which Text the Prince of Interpreters speaks to this Effect: *The Apostle dares to call them Reprobates, who dare to undervalue the Gospel; and reject it.*

D. 11. *Make use of his Men, if you would know the Mind of the Master.* Our Common Master is God. Ministers are Men of God. Men, by God furnished and enclined to teach the good Knowledge of him. And so sent, and employed by God thus to do, that it may not be expected that God should teach without these Under-Teachers. Or, work without these Co-workers of his Appointing. Wherefore, wo is theirs, (as many as they be) who read the Word, but make no use of Ministers Mouths, or Books to help them understand what is too hard for them. Never put down a Leaf, and go show the difficult Text, with desire of Explication, Mal. 3. 7. *The Priest's Lips should preserve Knowledge, and the People should seek the Law at his Mouth.* [Marvellous Madnes this is, and no less is our Rich Peoples Neglect to buy, and read our excellent Annotations on the Holy Bible.] Which maketh wise Men to take up the Royal Preacher's Exclamation, Prov. 17. 16. *Wherefore is there a*

Price in the Hand of a Fool to get Wisdom, seeing he hath no Heart to it?

D. 12. *Do what Eliphaz bid Job, in your reading of the Word: That is, Know it for your selves, Job 5. 27. We render it, Know it for thy Good. But, the Hebrew is, Know it for thy self. However, no wrong is done to the Text; for only that which you know for your self, and do apply, can do you good. The Word of Life will be a Word of no Life unto you; no, but a Word of Death, of Death unto Death; unless you take it to your selves as you read it. q. d. This Reproof is of my Sin. This Precept calls for my Duty, &c. Suppose your own Names written at the beginning of every Chapter, if you read for your own Soul's welfare. Else, it is odds, but the Knowledge you get will be as bad or worse than none. One, that first puffs up to Pride, and nextly puffs down to Hell. Wherefore, in your Reading urge your Souls with that Question, Rom. 2. 21. *Teachest thou not thy self?* And, with that Caution, 1 Cor. 9. 27. *Lest that I my self should be a Castaway.**

D. 13. *Judge of Scriptures, as Physicians do of Herbs. The Comparifon is not odious; most sure it is, all Parts of Scripture are not alike important and momentous. There be the more weighty things of the Law; greater Commands, and lesser. Neither are all Parts of alike Elegance of Speech, and Beauty of Language. Ifaiah's Stile, and that of Amos, do much differ. A wise Reader, therefore, makes a difference; and reads most those Parts which are of most use unto him. And, as the Physician judges of Herbs by their medicinal Vertues, not by fair Colours and sweet Odors; preferring such as heal above those that adorn and please the Eye: So the true Christian makes his Judgment and special Choice, concerning the Spiritual Reign of Christ, more than his Temporal. And, the Doctrine of Repentance from bad Works, Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and Obedience to the Gospel, much more than the Genealogies*

of the Patriarchs, &c.] To any that shall be so perverse, as to neglect this Rule, I have little to say more than the Apostle's Words in 1 Cor. 14. 38. *If any Man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.*

D. 14. *Read not God's Books so as Conscience requires us to read some Mens Books:* That is, by leaps, and with skipping over many Parts, to the few good ones worth our time. No, but in your constant course of Reading, *read All the Holy Scripture, and in Order. All of it;* for there is nothing but what has been, or is now, or will one day or other be of use to you. And, in Order; which is such a Servant and Friend to Memory, that one would think it should easily command Practice. It is a very extensive Precept that is given us, 1 Cor. 14. 40. *Let all things be done — in order.* Inasmuch that my Prayer is, *Lord have Mercy on us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.*

D. 15. *So read, as wise Men do eat.* To wit, so as they find to fit them best for God's Service. Neither *starving* themselves, or *glutting* themselves. Various their *Constitutions* are; and so, therefore, their *Meals* are. The weaker of them, who can digest but little at a time, do eat the less at a time, and the more frequently. The stronger eat more freely at a Meal. As your *Memories* and *Affections* are, so must the *Portions of your Reading at one time* be. It is but blind Zeal, of which any Men drive on in Duties, otherwise than as *Jacob* drove on in Journey; Gen. 33. 14. *According as the Children be able to endure.*

D. 16. *Think what a Mercy it is, to have Bibles, without fear of being laid in Irons.* Bibles are not every Country's Mercy. It is to a small part of Mankind, that God doth as yet vouchsafe them. *Pagans* hear not of them, and the Vassals of *Anti-christ* do rage against them. *Trent-Council* saith, *If a Man presume to have a Bible, he cannot be absolved from his Sins.* It forbids all Bookfellers to sell a Bible, under the Penalty that the Bishops Will and Pleasure

shall be to set. But, what end hereof? Rob not God, then, of his Praise and Thanks for this inestimable Benefit. Ingratitude for it, provokes him to deny the use of it. When we look on our Bibles, let us ever say, as *Psalm 147. 20. He hath not dealt so with every Nation. As for his Judgments, they have not known them. Praise we the Lord.*

D. 17. *Read the Holy Scriptures with Doves Eyes.* With holy Intentions. Hypocrites do aim very low; and the Reward they have is mean and momentany. If we aim higher, we shall gain more. God useth not to frustrate, or with a strait hand to requite such Endeavours as are sincerely for his Glory. Neither do his Servants use to put forth less than all their Strength, when in Holy Duties they have Holy Ends. Read for God's Glory in your own and in the Salvation of others; design this truly and solely in your Reading; then you shall not read without Profiting. If you aim at God's Glory above all things, (in this, and in your other Duties) you have Christ's Word for it, that *whatever you do shall prosper.* So it is that we understand his words, *Mar. 6. 22. If thine Eye be single, thy whole Body shall be full of Light.*

D. 18. *Remember when you are Reading, who are Writing.* Who are writing down, how you read. Conscience, God's Vicegerent in you, still writes; and then as surely as at any time, when it speaks least. And the Books of this Scribe must be opened one day. Besides, we do also read of a *Book of Remembrance* that God has. And, it's certain, that as he doth never slumber, he doth always remember what we do. Then it is that we are most like to read as we ought, when we read with these Writings remembered. And with this considered that is told us, *Rev. 20. 12. The Dead are judged out of those things which are written in the Books.*

D. 19. *Forget not, that Reading is Hearing.* When you are reading God's Word, you are hearing God speak. And though not in his only way of speaking

to us, nor in his principal way of speaking to us; yet in a wise and gracious way of his appointing. - And a way which he very often blesses to Conversion and to Consolation. And a way, without which his Blessing, is not to be expected by us in other ways. If it be said to every Minister, Give attendance to Reading! 1 Tim. 4. 13. (i. e. study thou the Scriptures) no doubt but every private Christians is required, as much as his Avocations unto secular Business do allow, to do the same. Of the King on the Throne it is required, Deut. 17. 19. That he read in the Book of the Lord all the days of his Life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God. And, that the same is required of Subjects as well as Kings, is plain from Christ's frequent Question put unto such; Mat. 12. 3, 5. Have ye not read? Have ye not read in the Book of the Law? Luke 6. 3. Have ye not read so much as this? Mat. 21. 16. Have ye never read? Mark 12. 10. Have ye not read this Scripture?

D. 20. Where Reading ends, see that Practising begins. As soon as the Bible is laid out of your hand, if alone, then think; if in Company, speak; if called to any Business, act; according to what you have been reading. Let God above, Conscience within, and Men all round you, see, that 'tis your governing Rule. The more you practise what you read, the more you will read effectually unto Practice, and unto Comfort. Who is there but feels what the old Philosopher says? *Ἀπὸν δάσκειν, &c. Whatever we learn to do, by doing we learn.* And, who doth at all observe, and not plainly see, what the Royal Psalmist saith; Psalm 111. 10. *A good Understanding have all they that do his Commandments.*

FINIS.

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